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FRP: , , , 4, , , 8
 STATE

ACTION: NONE INFO: DONOVA, NMON, ODPB-B, ODPD-D, ODPN-N, ODPS-S, OPCTR/EALA, OPCTR/EEWE, PRINT, RF, SOV/TW/RPL, STATDICT, FILE, DCEA/1, EA/ANZP, EA/RR, EUR/NOR-2, EUR/RR, LA/CATFR, LA/CR, LA/NOG-5, LA/SANOG, ALA/MC/N-2, ALA/PO/LA, CI/PROD, ICS/HC/LA, IR/L, NCPM, NIO/LA, OTS/SAD, PPS/INSC, PPS/PG, (26/W)

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 DE RUFHOS #6646 2961429

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
 Release () Excise () Deny () Declassify
 Date 2/21/02 Exemption _____

ZNR UUUUU ZZH
 O 231428Z OCT 86
 FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
 TO RUEHIA/USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5635
 INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6555
 RUFHSK/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 9813
 RUFHCP/AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 0230
 RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0128
 RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0229

BT

EZ1:

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EZ2:

USIA

USIA FOR P/G (HAMILTON), ARA (JEWELL), INFO EU
 (SCHLOEDER)

STATE FOR ARA/P (LAGANA), S/LPD

E.O. 12356: N/A

SUBJECT: U.S. JOURNALIST TONY AVIRGAN IN OSLO

REFS: OSLO 6600

1. U.S. JOURNALIST TONY AVIRGAN HAS SURFACED IN OSLO, AND HAS RECEIVED SOME MEDIA ATTENTION REGARDING HIS SUIT NOW PENDING IN U.S. FEDERAL COURT IN MIAMI AGAINST THIRTY DEFENDENTS, INCLUDING FDN LEADER ALFONSO CALERO, ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN THE PLACING AND DETONATING OF AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE IN LA PENCA, NICARAGUA ON MAY 30, 1984 IN WHICH A U.S. AND TWO OTHER JOURNALISTS WERE KILLED.

2. THE SUIT, WHICH HAS BEEN FILED BY THE CHRISTIC INSTITUTE OF WASHINGTON D.C. ON BEHALF OF AVIRGAN AND HIS WIFE, MORTHA HONEY, ALLEGES THAT THE LA PENCA BOMBING WAS PART OF AN OVERALL SCHEME BY "CONTRA"

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LEADERS AND THEIR U.S. SUPPORTERS. POST IS AWARE THAT BOTH AVIRGAN AND HONEY HAVE BEEN CITED AS SOVIET DISINFORMATION SOURCES. UNFORTUNATELY, THE EVIDENCE IS NOT COMPELLING ENOUGH TO DISCREDIT HIM HERE.

3. THE TIMING OF AVIRGAN'S APPEARANCE COINCIDES WITH THE STEPPED UP TEMPO OF ACTIVITIES BY PEACE AND OTHER GROUPS HERE (SEE REFTEL) IN ORDER TO PRESS FOR INCREASED GON SUPPORT OF THE SANDINISTAS. THE ORCHESTRATION OF AVIRGAN'S APPEARANCE ON THE NORWEGIAN BROADCASTING COMPANY'S (NRK) EVENING NEWS (1.4 MILLION VIEWERS) ON OCTOBER 20 AND HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AT THE NORWEGIAN PRESS CLUB ON THE 21, DEMONSTRATE THE RELATIVE EASE WITH WHICH SANDINISTA SUPPORTERS GAIN ACCESS TO THE MAJOR MEDIA OUTLETS IN NORWAY. IN THE CASE OF THE NRK-TV INTERVIEW, WE HAD BEEN ADVISED THAT A SEGMENT OF THE INTERVIEW WITH AMB. MATLOCK, WHICH ALSO TOOK PLACE ON OCTOBER 20, WOULD APPEAR ON THE EVENING NEWS (1.8 MILLION VIEWERS) AND A LONGER PORTION WOULD BE SHOWN DURING THE LATER EVENING NEWS. THE MATLOCK INTERVIEW DID NOT APPEAR AT ALL DURING THE SECOND, LATER PROGRAM, BUT A THREE MINUTE INTERVIEW WITH AVIRGAN DID.

4. ON OCTOBER 22, SEVERAL STORIES OF THE AVIRGAN CONFERENCE AT THE NORWEGIAN PRESS CLUB APPEARED. SENSATIONALIST LIBERAL DAGBLADET (CIRC. 175,000) CARRIED A STORY BY JAN-ERIK SMILDEN, THEIR LATIN AMERICAN WRITER, WHO QUOTED AVIRGAN AS FINGERING JOHN HULL, AN ALLEGED CIA CONTACT MAN IN COSTA RICA, FOR FINANCING AND ORGANIZING THE ATTACK AGAINST PASTORA. HULL IS ALSO ONE OF THE THIRTY MEN CITED AS CONSPIRATORS IN THE BRIEF SUBMITTED IN FEDERAL COURT IN MIAMI. SMILDEN, HAS A RECORD OF PRO-SANDINISTA SUPPORT.

5. VAART-LAND (OUR LAND) THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY AFFILIATED NEWSPAPER (CIRC. 26,000) CARRIED THE OTHER STORY, WHICH RAISED THE ISSUE OF VP BUSH'S "CLOSE CONNECTIONS" WITH HULL. THE ARTICLE DEMONSTRATES ONCE AGAIN THE MEDIA SUPPORT GIVEN TO THE SANDINISTAS BY THE OFFICIAL CHURCH IN NORWAY.

6. DURING THE PRESS CLUB SESSION, AVIRGAN STATED, BEGIN QUOTE: THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IS THE PROPAGANDA ARM OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND DESIGNED TO SPREAD DISINFORMATION ABOUT NICARAGUA. END QUOTE

7. ALTHOUGH MUCH OF THIS INFORMATION REPORTED ON THE NRK-TV INTERVIEW AND IN THE PRESS IS NOT ENTIRELY NEW, AVIRGAN'S APPEARANCE MAY BE REPEATED IN OTHER SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES. POST WOULD APPRECIATE ANY GUIDANCE IN DEALING WITH AVIRGAN'S ALLEGATIONS.

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END OF MESSAGE

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